

## session 11: **teacher resource**

### CHARACTERISTICS OF HEALTHY DATING RELATIONSHIPS

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1. **Each person is comfortable with who s/he is and has high self esteem.** Work on who you are and what you want before you get into a serious relationship. It's important not to feel like you need another person to make you complete.
2. **The two people like, admire and respect each other.** Choose a partner carefully. Take time to pick someone you like, admire and respect.
3. **Each person is accepted for who they are.** Never expect that you can change someone. It's also important that you don't feel that you need to change to be appreciated or accepted. It's a problem if you're putting up a front.
4. **Communication is open, clear and honest.** Become a good listener. It's important to be able to say what you're really thinking and feeling. It's also important to respect each other's boundaries and limits.
5. **Healthy couples recognize when they have conflict and can manage it without violence.** Conflict is normal and happens in all relationships. Managing conflict is a skill you can learn and practice. Don't fall into the trap of ignoring conflict. Communication is especially important when there is a conflict. Listen to each other, respect differences, compromise, talk about past disagreements and figure out what to do differently in the future. Conflict occurs with many individuals, but violence is more than the result of poor conflict resolution skills.
6. **Friendship is the basis of the relationship.** Make time to have fun and keep the friendship alive.
7. **Do things to show caring and appreciation for one another.** Learn what makes your boyfriend/girlfriend feel cared for and appreciated. This can feel like work sometimes but healthy relationships require work.
8. **Trust each other.** You learn to trust by observing (over time and in different situations) that you can depend on someone. There are two sides to trust – being able to demonstrate that you trust someone and being able to act in a trustworthy fashion.
9. **Respect each other.** Accept each other's opinions, values, limits, need for individual time, and so on.
10. **Have people who can support you.** You never feel that you have to hide what's going on in the relationship. You have people around who are supportive.

## **Keep in Mind:**

- In order to have a healthy relationship, it's important to love and take care of yourself before and while you're in the relationship.
- Healthy relationships increase your energy for the other things in your life. The relationship inspires you rather than drains you.
- A caring boyfriend/girlfriend will motivate and support you rather than confine or control you.
- It is never a good idea to completely wrap yourself up in someone to the exclusion of your family and friends.
- No relationship is perfect. There will be ups and downs in any relationship.
- Relationships that have a lot of conflict or abuse of any type (verbal, physical, emotional or sexual) are not healthy.
- If a little voice inside you is saying that something's not right in the relationship, *listen!* Talk with someone you trust, other than your boyfriend/girlfriend, about these concerns.